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## **AFRL awards \$42M research contract to Bell Aerospace**

*by J. Rich Garcia, Directed Energy Directorate*

KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. – A \$42 million contract that will advance laser effects research was awarded recently by the Air Force Research Laboratory's Directed Energy Directorate.

Bell Aerospace & Technologies Corp. of Boulder, Colo. received the 5-year contract.

According to Dr. Nicholas J. Morley, the program manager in the directorate's Laser Division, "The contractor will be providing us with lethality support – that is, helping to predict the effects of laser energy on a variety of materials, subsystems, components and major weapons systems."

The directorate's Laser Division maintains kilowatt-class carbon dioxide and chemical lasers that are used on a variety of test objects. Those lasers include two electric discharge coaxial lasers, generating 15,000- and 45,000-watts respectively. Also included is a chemical oxygen-iodine laser of the same type as is being used on the Airborne Laser, a Boeing 747-400F aircraft designed to use its laser to destroy ballistic missiles from hundreds of miles away.

The laboratory's Directed Energy Directorate is the United States Air Force's focal point for high-energy laser research. The organization has a workforce of more than 600 people and an annual budget of approximately \$150 million. @